

**PREDICTING LOCATIONS OF EMERGING HATE GROUPS IN MARYLAND
UTILIZING SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY**

by
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A capstone submitted to Johns Hopkins University in conformity with the requirements for
the degree of Master of Science in Geospatial Intelligence

Baltimore, Maryland
December 2020

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Abstract

In this analysis, principles behind Social Identity Theory were utilized as a basis to determine whether or not the demographic factors of income and racial diversity can predict where a hate group will likely emerge. This thesis will be tested using the state of Maryland. Specifically, the paper will help identify whether or not areas with a low income and a high diversity will become a breeding ground for hate organizations. To answer this question, the 2010 US census data on income and race dispersion throughout this state were collected. After the race dispersion was converted into a diversity index, it was concluded that areas of low income and high diversity could not explain why hate groups existed in their 2010 locations. However, these two demographic factors did correlate with the 2019 locations of these organizations. Therefore, it was concluded the Social Identity Theory could be utilized to anticipate and possibly predict where hate groups may emerge in Maryland in the future. The paper will also identify additional questions that it is hoped can be addressed by the 2020 census data when it is made available.

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Introduction

Hate groups have existed in the United States as far back as the colonial era.¹ According to the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), a hate group is “an organization that – based on its official statements or principles, the statements of its leaders, or its activities – has beliefs or practices that attack or malign an entire class of people, typically for their immutable characteristics”. By reason of their long history in the US, hate-motivated groups and hate-based violence are deeply engrained in American culture and history.²

With hate organizations active in US society since the nation’s creation, the question emerges about whether or not they can be detected early. These groups spread negative messaging, based on the individuals’ beliefs, that divide and hurt individuals. To try to locate the sources of some of the hate that spreads across America, an analysis will be conducted to determine if Social Identity Theory and the US census can be used to anticipate the likely future locations where a hate group will emerge. This study uses Maryland as an example to prove the concept.

Background on Hate Groups

Recently, hate groups have experienced a resurgence in the US. In 2018, the number of these groups operating in the country rose to a record of 1,020, a seven percent increase over the 954 groups reported in 2017, the fourth straight year of hate-group growth. Most of these groups follow some form of white supremacist ideology, which includes organizations such as neo-Nazis, Ku Klux Klan, racist skinheads, neo-Confederates, and white nationalists. Considering white supremacist groups alone, they increased from 100 known organizations in 2017 to 148 in

¹ Pezzella, Frank S. "The Legacy of Hate Crimes in American History." Hate Crime Statutes, 2017, 13-27.

² Ibid

2018 nationwide.³ With hate groups growing in American society, it becomes necessary to look at what factors lead to their creation, why they form, and where they locate themselves.

Hate groups form for complicated reasons. Many different reasons explain why a group may form. In the simplest sense, an extremist group may emerge when one or more individuals driven by a similar ideology, recruit other like-minded individuals to form a structured, or loosely-based, organization.⁴ When looking at the psychology behind why these individuals come together, the literature indicates that these organizations provide their members with a sense of belonging, identity, self-worth, and more.⁵ Once these groups form, they become effective coordination devices for hate crime activities. They become a catalyst for propaganda, ideology, and motivation to act for their movement and against the “hated” group.⁶

According to a report released by the SPLC in 2012, a suggestion was made that the majority of racial and ethnic hate groups in the United States were heavily concentrated in areas with lower incomes and greater diversity.⁷ The basis for this idea grows out of Social Identity Theory which was introduced by Henri Tajfel in 1974.⁸ He proposed that the groups to which people belonged provided an important source of personal social identity and a sense of belonging. Due to the importance of these groups, humans use a process of social categorization to divide the world into two categories: “us” and “them”.

Tajfel stated that stereotyping was a normal cognitive process that allows people to easily group things together.⁹ However, in doing so, there is a tendency to exaggerate the differences

³ "Hate Groups Reach Record High." Southern Poverty Law Center. Last modified February 19, 2019.

⁴ Anti-Defamation League. "How Hate Groups Form." ADL.

⁵ Yahagi, Ken. "The Effects of Hate Groups on Hate Crimes." *Review of Law & Economics* 15, no. 3 (2019): 1-14.

⁶ Anti-Defamation League. "How Hate Groups Form."

⁷ Chinni, Dante. "The Two Big Factors That Determine Where Hate Groups Thrive." NBC News. Last modified March 8, 2012. Accessed November 13, 2020.

⁸ Tajfel, Henri. "Social Identity and Intergroup Behaviour." *Social Science Information* 13, no. 2 (April 1974): 65–93.

⁹ Ibid.

and similarities in groups. The process of social categorization is often known today as the “us” versus “them” mentality and is an explanation for prejudicial attitudes seen in hate groups. In areas with lower incomes, fewer resources are readily available for individuals, which creates stress on the local society. When lower income is combined with higher diversity, one group of similar people tend to blame another group for the lack of access to resources.¹⁰ Therefore, areas with a low income and high diversity creates a community plagued with racially-divided groups following the “us” versus “them” mentality.

After understanding the basis of why, where, and factors leading to the creation of hate groups, the question of possibly identifying and predicting the future locations for these organizations, emerges. Based on the SPLC report, it should be possible to identify areas with a higher statistical probability for hate-group formation based on areas with both a low income and high diversity. In Maryland, in 2019, The SPLC tracked 20 hate groups.¹¹ To better understand whether tracking low income and high diversity areas can provide an anticipatory indicator where racial extremist groups will emerge, an analysis of Maryland data from the 2010 census, in conjunction with hate group locations from the same year, will be used as a sample to determine if census data on these two demographics can provide any predictive indicators about where hate groups will emerge in 2019 and in future years.

Methodology

To determine areas with both low incomes and high diversity throughout Maryland, individual geospatial analyses were conducted on each attribute type for 2010. Using census data of Maryland from 2010, a map was created based on median income for each census tract in the

¹⁰ Chinni, Dante. "The Two Big Factors That Determine Where Hate Groups Thrive." NBC News. Last modified March 8, 2012. Accessed November 13, 2020.

¹¹ Southern Poverty Law Center. "Hate Groups in Maryland in 2019." Map. 2019.

state. To best determine income trends across the region, the data was analyzed utilizing a standard deviation methodology.

Once incomes were captured by census tracts, census data was collected to depict the racial dispersion for each Maryland census tract. The US Census Bureau breaks down ethnicities into seven categories: White, Black, American Indian, Asian, Native Hawaiian, Non-Hispanic Other, and Hispanic. For each Maryland tract, the total number of citizens who self-identified as these races were categorized. Utilizing the Shannon-Wiener Index of Diversity formula, the diversity index (DI) was calculated for each city. The Shannon-Wiener Index of Diversity was chosen as it is based on measuring uncertainty.¹² Since it is assumed that the sample does not properly account for every citizen in the United States within the survey, it was determined that including a level of uncertainty within the DI calculation would be appropriate.

$$H' = - \sum_{i=1}^R \ln(p_i)$$

Equation 1: Shannon-Wiener Diversity Index

When using this formula, the first step is to take the total of each race type and divide it by the total population of the tract. Once the percent of the overall population in each race is calculated, the natural logarithm is taken of each percentage. The next step is to take the results from the first step and multiply them by the results for the second step. Lastly, the inverse sum is found for the races within the census tract. For each tract in the state these steps were carried out to determine the DI of each geographic region. Once the DI was determined for each area, the

¹² Kiernan, Diane. "Introduction, Simpson's Index and Shannon-weiner Index." OpenSUNY. Last modified August 17, 2020.

data was uploaded in to ArcGIS where a map was created including the standard deviation to depict the results.

For the hate group analysis, data within Maryland was collected from the Southern Poverty Law Center on the 2010 locations of these organizations. This data was geocoded and overlaid on the maps for income and diversity in order to complete the analysis. When analyzing only groups with a racially-driven ideology, the existing organizations in the state can be seen in the chart below. For the purpose of this analysis, state-wide groups were not included because location data on these groups was not specified.

Hate Groups in Maryland in 2010

Name of Group	City	Ideology
Aryan Nations 88	Sharpsburg	Neo-Nazi
Aryan Nations Knights of the KKK	Sharpsburg	Ku Klux Klan
Association of Independent Klansmen Knights of the KKK	State wide	Ku Klux Klan
Brotherhood of Klans Knights of the KKK	State wide	Ku Klux Klan
Center for Perpetual Diversity	Gaithersburg	White Nationalist
Council of Conservative Citizens	Silver Spring	White Nationalist
Creativity Movement	State wide	Neo-Nazi
Knight Riders Knights of the KKK	State wide	Ku Klux Klan
League of the South	Prince Frederick	Neo-Confederate
Maryland National Socialist Party	Elkridge	Neo-Nazi
Maryland State Skinheads	Baltimore	Racist Skinhead
Nation of Islam	Baltimore	Black Separatist
National Black Foot Soldier Network	Baltimore	Black Separatist
National Socialist Movement	Elkridge	Neo-Nazi
SS Regalia	Edgewater	Neo-Nazi
The Israelite Church of God in Jesus Christ	Baltimore	Black Separatist
United Northern and Southern Knights of the KKK	State wide	Ku Klux Klan

Once 2010 hate group data was included in the maps, it was removed and replaced with hate group locations in 2019. The 2019 location data was overlaid on the income and diversity

maps. As with the 2010 information, all state-wide groups from 2019 were not included in the analysis. The 2019 listing of hate groups in Maryland is below.

Hate Groups in Maryland in 2019

Name of Group	City	Ideology
American Free Press	Upper Marlboro	General Hate
American Identity Movement	State wide	White Nationalist
Atomwaffen Division	State wide	Neo-Nazi
Barnes Review/Foundation for Economic Liberty, Inc.	Upper Marlboro	Holocaust Denial
Be Active Front USA	State wide	Racist Skinhead
Great Millstone	Baltimore	Black Separatist
Help Save Maryland	Monkton	Anti-Immigrant
In the Spirit of Chartres Committee	Glenelg	Radical Traditional Catholicism
Israel United in Christ	Upper Marlboro	Black Separatist
Israelite School of Universal Practical Knowledge	Baltimore	Black Separatist
Israelite the Branches	Baltimore	Black Separatist
Jamaat al-Muslimeen	Baltimore	General Hate
Label 56	Baltimore	Hate Music
Loyal White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan	State wide	Ku Klux Klan
Mass Resistance	Lexington Park	Anti-LGBTQ
Patriot Front	State wide	White Nationalist
Refugee Resettlement Watch	Fairplay	Anti-Muslim
The Israelite Church of God in Jesus Christ	Baltimore	Black Separatist
United Kingdom of Israel Congregation	Baltimore	Black Separatist
Watchmen for Israel	Baltimore	Black Separatist

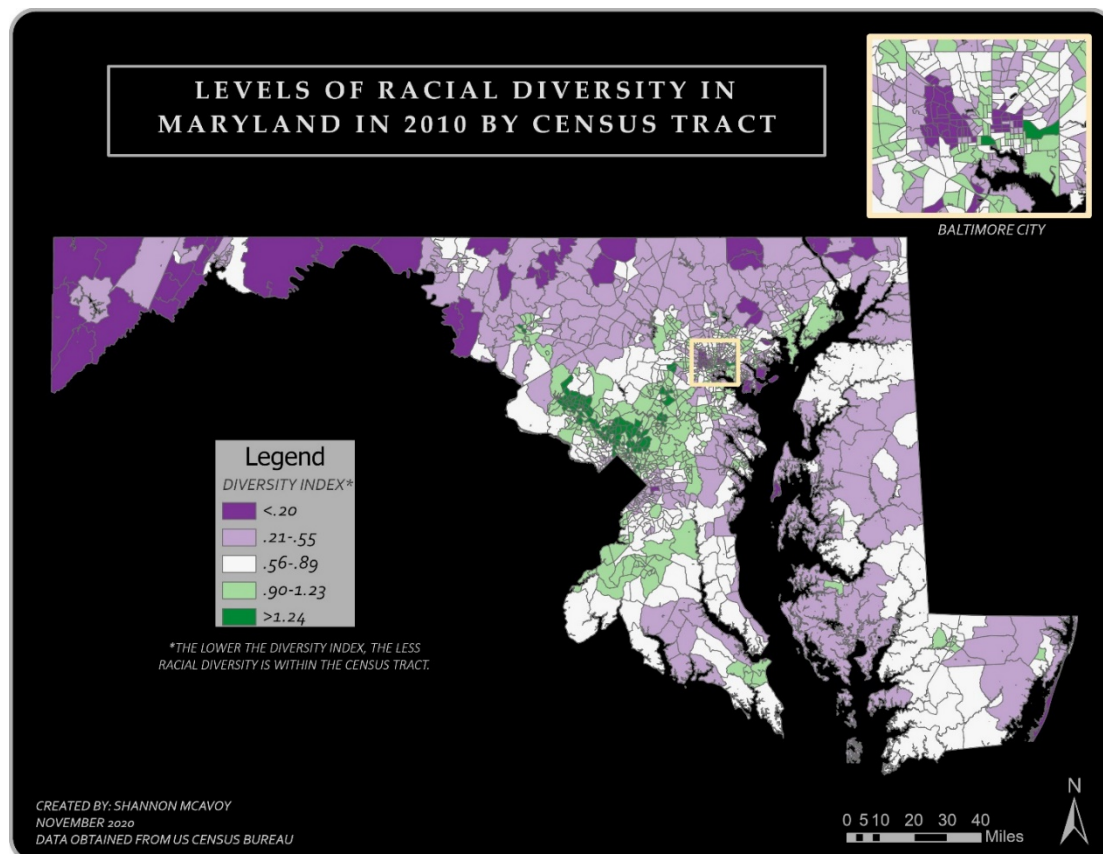
In addition to 2010 census data, attempts were made to incorporate 2000 census information into the analysis in order to determine a temporal pattern exists. Due to how 2000 census data was tracked and published, it was unable to be included in this analysis. 2000 census data available was only found by city and not by census tract, the method of recording for the 2010 information.

Due to the nature of how the data was collected, there is no monetary costs to this research. All data available by the US Census Bureau and the SPLC is free and open to the public. Time costs were mostly spent on the data collected about racial diversity. The majority of

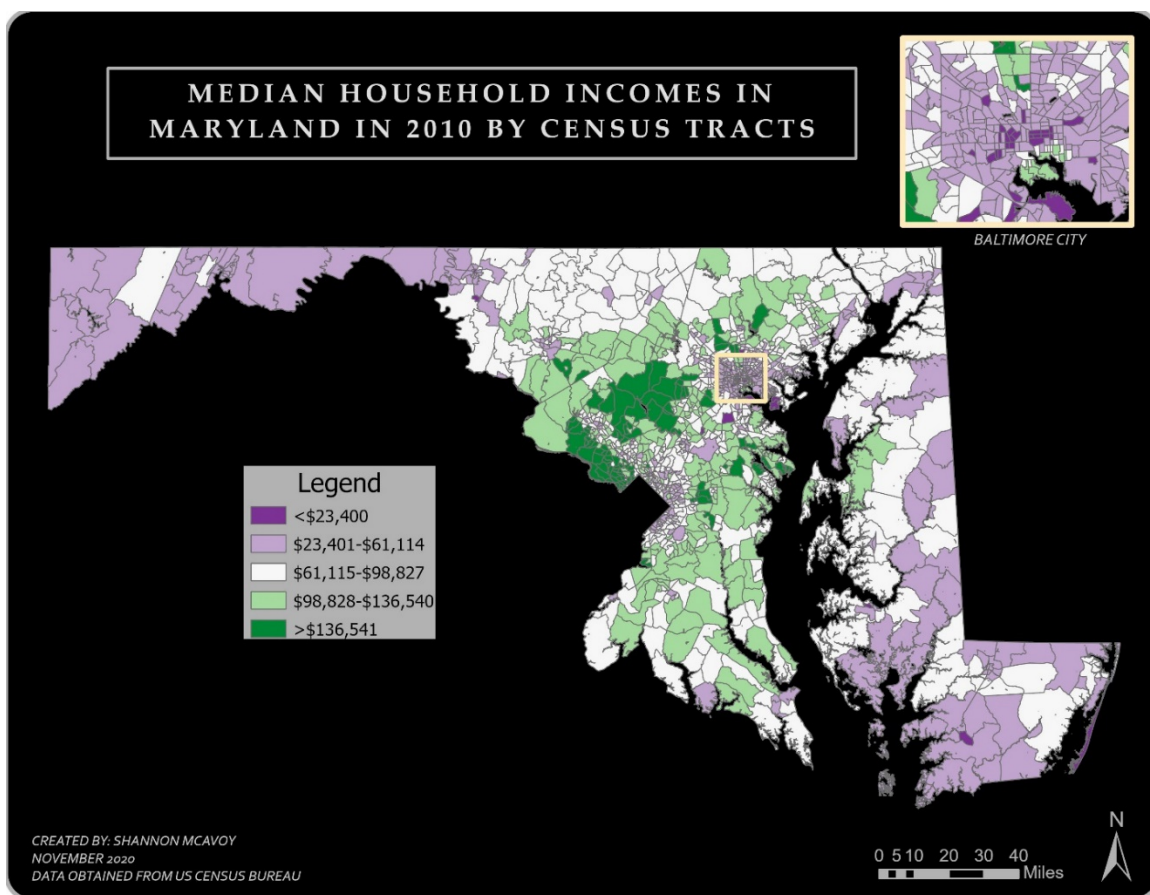
time spent during this analysis was focused on cleaning this data and converting it in to a diversity index. Hate group information was easily accessible and simple to geocode; therefore, this portion of the research did not require extensive effort.

Results

When looking at levels of racial diversity in Maryland in 2010, areas with known large cities had increased levels of diversity while areas without large cities had less diversity. Specifically, in Northern Maryland, these regions show diversity index numbers of .55 or lower while areas outside Washington, DC and Baltimore, MD show the highest diversity index with numbers .90 and greater. Within the Shannon-Weiner Diversity Index, the greater the index, the higher the diversity.



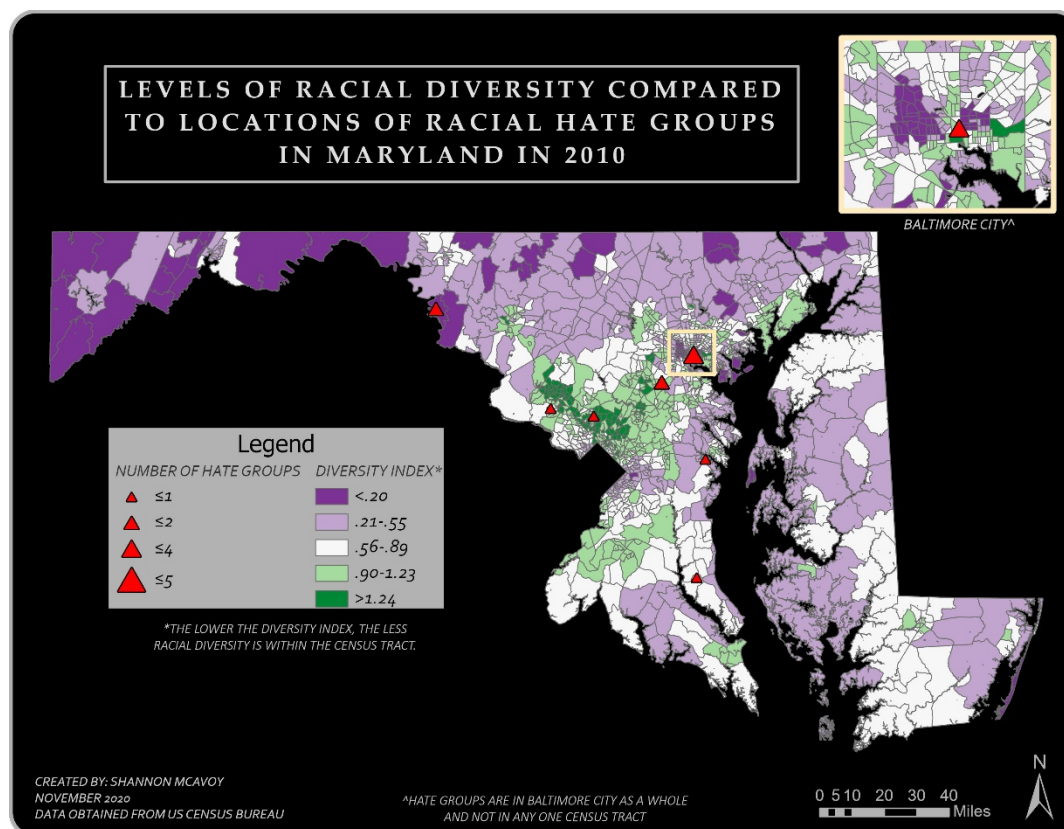
In terms of income, areas not in or directly around a major city tend to have higher income levels. However, the further away from major cities, the lower the income level. There is a correlation seen when analyzing both diversity and income together. Areas with less diversity, tend to have less income while areas with high diversity, tend to have higher incomes. However, it is important to note that there are a few outliers in this distribution. These outliers tend to be regions low in income but high in diversity. According to the Social Identity Theory, these would be the regions in which we expect to see hate groups.

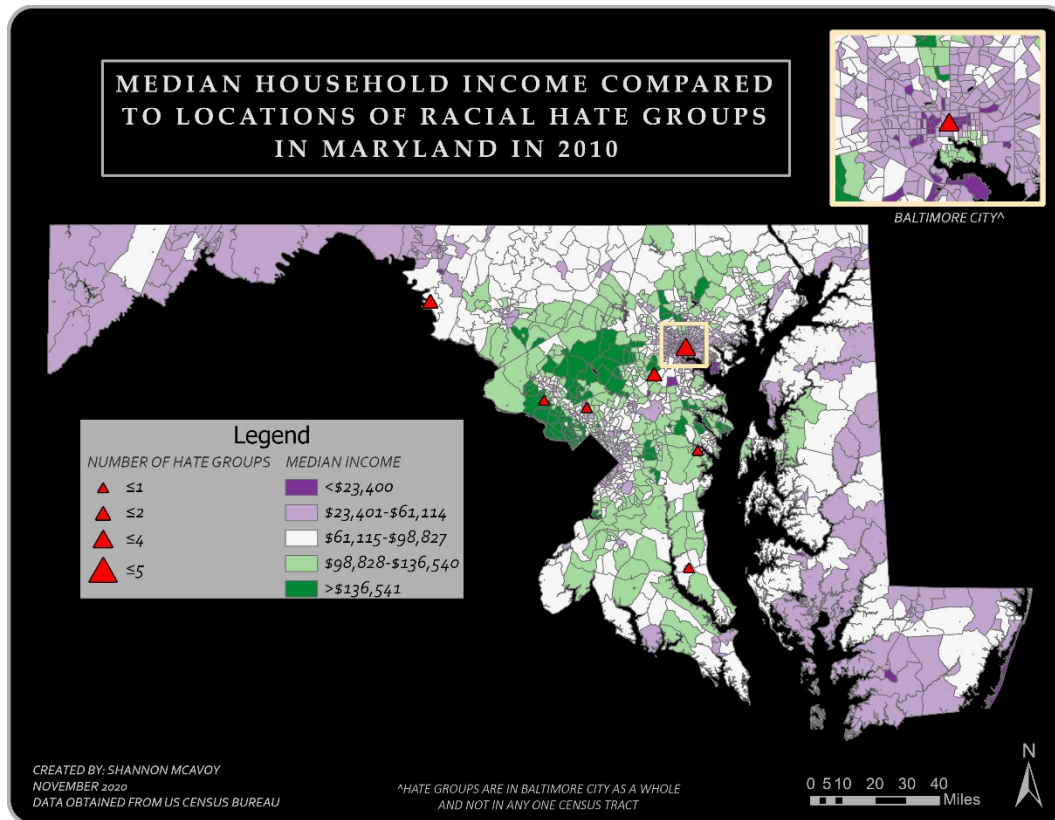


Once the hate group information from 2010 is incorporated a pattern emerges. For the majority of the hate group data, the organizations locate themselves in areas of medium to high diversity levels. Two exceptions: one in northern Maryland and the other in the middle of Maryland directly below Baltimore. On account of how hate group data is stored by the Southern

Poverty Law Center, Baltimore hate organizations do not have a geolocation more specific than the city.

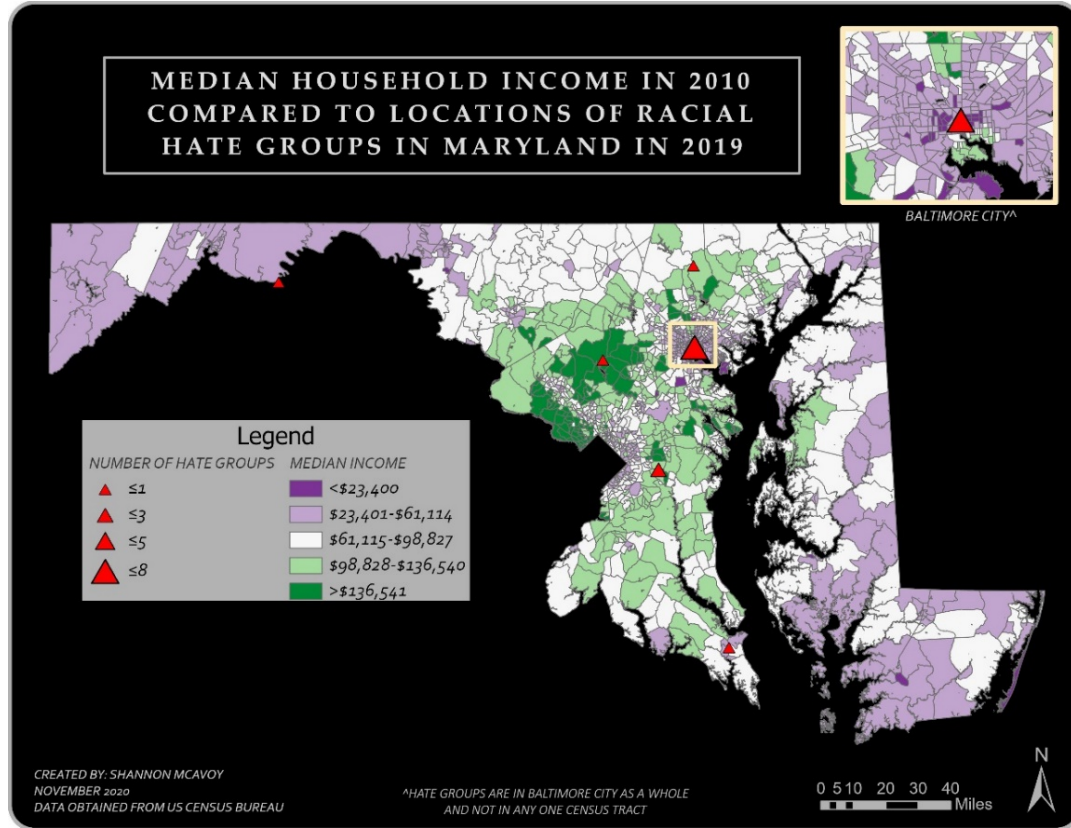
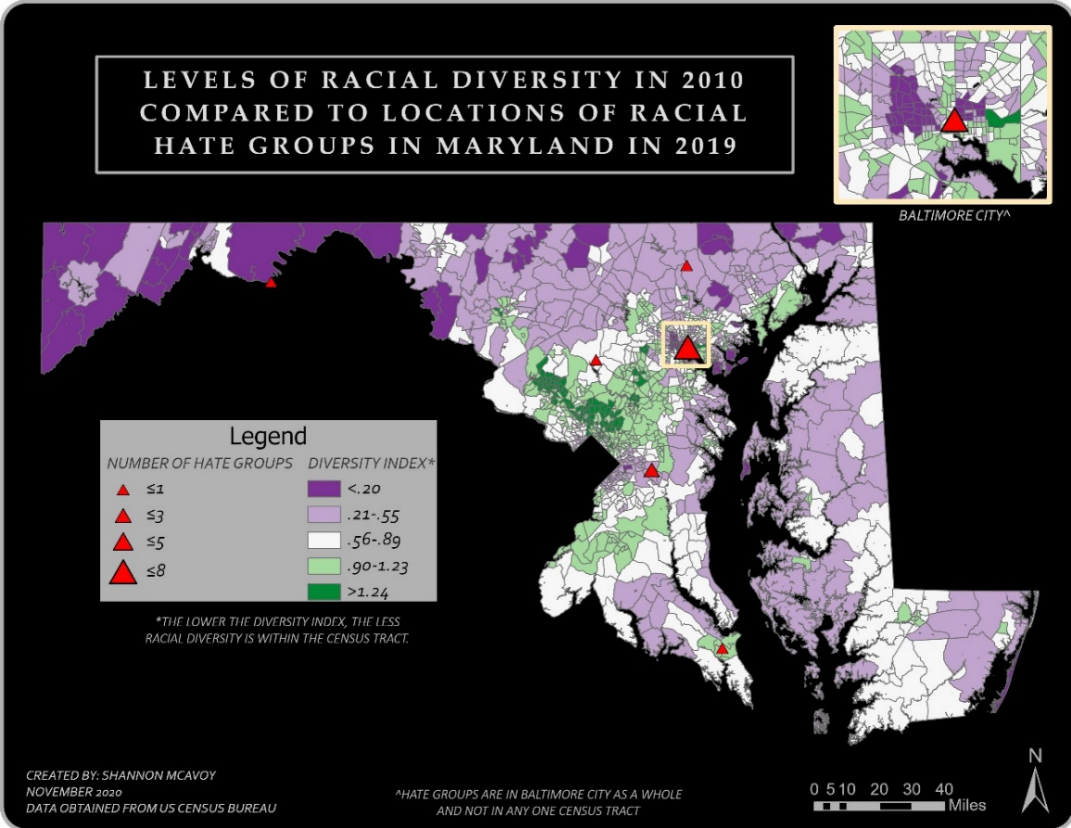
In regards to income, hate groups appear in regions with higher median incomes. However, Baltimore is an outlier compared to the rest of Maryland. Baltimore exhibits low median income and medium-low diversity. Yet, this city has the most hate groups of all census tracts. In 2010, Baltimore contained 5 of these organizations while other tracts contained either 1 or 2. Therefore, when comparing the locations of hate organizations to diversity levels and income, it becomes evident that Social Identity Theory only partially explains the locations of hate groups in 2010.





The final portion of this analysis included looking at hate-group information from 2019 and comparing it to 2010 census data. Although Maryland-based hate groups are still dispersed across the state in 2019, there is a greater centralization of them in Baltimore. Between 2010 and 2019, Baltimore-based hate groups increased from 5 to 8 while the total number of groups state wide increased from 13 to 15.

When the two demographic characteristics are examined at the locations of hate groups, the evidence points to the validity of the Social Identity Theory. In areas with lower incomes and higher diversity in 2010, hate groups emerged by 2019. This establishes that the theory, while remaining valid over time, does not fully explain the present locations of hate groups. It suggests that areas currently with high diversity and low income today are more likely to be the future home of a hate group.



Future Steps

To further measure the validity of the Social Identity Theory as a predictive tool for hate group emergence, 2020 census data will be needed in order to understand current income and racial diversity levels across the state. Once this information is gathered and publicly available, an annual analysis of SPLC hate group data can be utilized to determine if regions that meet the criteria of low income, high diversity communities in 2020 could indeed produce an extremist group in future years. This analysis would need to be repeated annually for at least five to nine years to determine the validity of the predictive nature of Social Identity Theory among 2010 census data, 2019 hate group locations, and 2020 census data. This analysis will focus on answering whether a temporal pattern can be established between the indicative markers found in the 2020 census to where hate groups emerge.

In addition to incorporating temporal data in to future analyses, further research will be utilized to determine if there is an appropriate way to incorporate the locations of statewide hate groups. By incorporating statewide hate groups, it will allow the establishment of further examples to the pattern as it emerges. Once 2020 census data is released, there are also plans to explore this theory within additional states across the country. However, this would occur after analysis of 2020 data in Maryland is completed.

Conclusion

Based on Social Identity Theory, hate groups emerge in areas that can be described as having a low income and a high diversity. This theory has its basis in-part, to the idea that these conditions create a “us” versus “them” mentality between like groups. Although the initial analysis proved that 2010 census data on income and diversity could not explain the locations of hate groups in Maryland in 2010, the census data did provide reasons why these groups were in

their specific locations in 2019. This leads to the conclusion that based on this information, the Social Identity Theory may be predictive in nature but not explanatory when looking at current locations where of hate groups.

This conclusion is promising in potentially predicting where hate groups will emerge in order to search for early signs of their existence. However, to solidify this analysis, additional research will need to be conducted after the release of the 2020 census information is released. Once this information is available, over time, these organizations can be tracked in conjunction with census data to determine if the groups begin to emerge where the 2020 data shows evidence of the two necessary conditions.

This analysis proves the potential for using income and diversity statistics to determine potential locations where a racial hate group may emerge, based on Social Identity Theory. After future research is conducted, the hope is that local and state officials may be able to track vulnerable locations in order to implement programs and policies to deter the emergence of these negative groups in their regions so hate can no longer spread as easily in this nation.

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